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Big Business Helped Run Auschwitz

Leading West German businessmen were directly implicated in the running of the nazi death camp at Auschwitz, according to evidence produced at the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt, West Germany, on March 19th.

Dr Jürgen Kuczynski, professor at Humboldt University in East Berlin, called as an expert witness, laid evidence before the court that IG Farben, the huge German chemical monopoly, had:

1. Provided funds for the building and expansion of Auschwitz.

2. Hired Auschwitz prisoners from the SS for three marks per day to work in a special branch IG Farben factory constructed in the camp.

3. Handed over labour slaves to the SS for disposal when they became too weak to work.

He drew attention to the fact that many of the IG Farben men named in the nazi documents which he produced today hold top posts in West German industry.

The Frankfurt court, which has been in session since December 1963, is trying 22 SS guards for "murder in an indeterminate number of cases" during their service in Auschwitz concentration camp. Professor Kuczynski was called as an expert witness by Dr Kaul, leading GDR lawyer, who is taking part in the trial as "friend of the court" on behalf of GDR citizens whose families were murdered in Auschwitz.

After hearing Professor Kuczynski's evidence, the court decided to reject it as "prejudiced"; the court made no attempt to dispute the authenticity of the documentary evidence which he had produced.

Here are some of the main points made by Professor Kuczynski in his testimony, all of which was based upon nazi files, documents from the files of the IG Farben, and sworn statements made by IG Farben directors:

Professor Kuczynski opened his evidence by quoting from a letter written on April 30th 1942 by SS General Pohl, administrative chief of the concentration camps, which stated that the progress of the war had brought a structural change in the task of the concentration camps. "Security and educational motives are no longer the main factor; it is becoming more important to mobilise all prisoners for armaments work", this letter stated.

A letter signed by Walther Dürrfeld, later director of the IG Farben slave-labour factory in Auschwitz, dated December 21st 1941, noted that IG Farben had already advanced two million marks to the SS to help extend Auschwitz camp, and suggested that further help should be made available. The letter was addressed to IG directors Bütefisch and Ambros.

(Details of the present employment of persons named in this summary are appended at the end of this article.)

Examined by American war crimes officers after the war, Dürrfeld gave the following sworn testimony (Nuremberg Document No. NI-4184):

"Acting on instructions from Herr Bütefisch, I took part in March or April 1941, together with him, in discussions with SS General Wolff in Berlin, in connection with using concentration camp prisoners in the IG Farben works at Auschwitz. We agreed that the prisoners should be supervised by the SS, and that there should be no contact between the prisoners and the other workers. We fixed a price of three marks daily for unskilled prisoners and 4 marks for skilled prisoners. The sum was paid monthly to the SS in Berlin."

On May 26th 1942, Dürrfeld wrote a memorandum on a discussion which he had had with Rudolf Hoess, SS commandant of Auschwitz:

"The commandant reported that he had received orders from the Reichsführer of the SS (Himmler) to provide us under all circumstances with up to 4500 prisoners. He would carry out these orders by the middle of June, the target date, and all his plans for the disposal of the female Jewish prisoners had been adjusted accordingly. In a thorough discussion of the quality of prisoner needed, I set the following conditions: 1. Strong prisoners capable of work. 2. The same prisoners to be sent every day to the same place of work ..."

The weekly report 94/95 prepared by the IG Farben works, Auschwitz, stated for March 19th 1943:

"At present we are using 3517 persons (prisoners). It was planned to use 4500 persons. We therefore agreed, that since a relatively large number of prisoners were in quarantine or the sick-bay, the camp should be expanded by June 1st to a capacity of 5000 prisoners ... and at a later date to 6000 prisoners."

(This report refers to the special IG Farben camp, which was outside the main Auschwitz camp.)

Professor Kuczynski stated that other reports from IG Farben in Auschwitz showed that the IG officials had demanded the right to take part in the "selections", at which sick and weaker prisoners were sorted out for liquidatoin. He quoted the IG Farben report 90/91 dated February 10th, which stated:

"Visit of SS Lieutenant Colonel Maurer. He agreed to increase the number of prisoners shortly from 4000 to about 4500 ... Maurer also agreed that all weaker prisoners could be carted away ('abgeschoben'), thus ensuring a practically full output, comparable to that of German unskilled labourers."

Professor Kuczynski concluded his testimony as follows:

"I have shown what every historian knows, that the business leaders, the state and the Nazi Party, and specifically the IG Farben trust and the SS Concentration Camp Administration, co-operated in the closest manner in building and running

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Auschwitz

Auschwitz Concentration Camp, and its subsidiary camp Monowitz."

(Many of the IG Farben businessmen named in the testimony are back in business in West Germany today:

Walther Dürrfeld, *director of the IG camp factory at Auschwitz, was sentenced to 8 years imprisonment for war crimes by a US Military Court in Nuremberg in July 1948. Released long before the sentence was served, Dürrfeld is today on the board of directors of Scholven-Chemie AG and four other big West German chemical firms.*

Otto Ambros, *IG Farben director and manager of the Auschwitz plant, was also sentenced to 8 years for war crimes and prematurely released. He is also a director of Scholven-Chemie AG and other chemical firms.*

Heinrich Bütefisch, *IG Farben director and production chief of the Auschwitz plant, who served part of a six year sentence for war crimes, is today deputy chairman of the board of director of Ruhrchemie AG. In March 1964 he was decorated by West German President Heinrich Lübke with the "Federal Grand Cross" for outstanding services.*

(for more on Bütefisch, see back page of this issue)

Italians Protest West-German General

Two Italian MPs have asked the government to investigate the wartime record in Italy of General Heinrich Trettner, today Commander in Chief of the West German armed forces. During the last part of the Second World War Trettner commanded a nazi paratroop division in Italy, and took part in "clean-up" operations against Italian partisans.

On March 20th, the Association of Former Partisans in Tuscany called on the Italian Government to protest against Trettner's appointment. "Hundreds of men, women and children were murdered in Tuscany while Trettner's 4th Paratroop Division was stationed there in August 1944", the protest stated. Trettner was also responsible for the destruction of irreplaceable artistic treasures in Florence.

Full details of General Trettner's record were given in GERMAN REPORT dated March 20th.

Soviet Statement on West German Policy

The Soviet Government defined its attitude to West German official policy in a long statement published by TASS on March 8th. Here are some of the important points made in this statement:

The annual report of the West German Government for 1963 made it clear that the German Federal Republic had not changed its policy; it still aimed at absorbing the GDR and restoring the former German Reich, the Soviet statement said. The report made no mention of such pressing problems as the conclusion of a peace treaty or settlement of the West Berlin question.

The West German Government refused to normalise relations with the GDR and had for years tried, through its so-called Hallstein doctrine, to prevent other states from doing so, on the grounds that West Germany was the only legitimate German state; but many other countries had taken the realistic decision to recognise both German states.

Any country which did not recognise the GDR was supporting illusions in West Germany that it would connive in its dangerous plans against the GDR, the Soviet statement said. But a clash between West Germany and the GDR would inevitably lead to a clash between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty states, and that meant world war.

Establishing diplomatic relations with both German states was not an ideological issue. Those in power in France, Britain, the USA and other NATO countries did not in fact think that the existence of two German states conflicted with their national interests, but they had not yet been far-sighted enough to act in this sense.

Further recognition of the GDR would provide an additional rampart against the threat to peace presented by West Germany's increasingly blatant policy of aggression. West Germany was already proclaiming that it had the strongest army of any NATO country in Europe and was demanding access to nuclear weapons.

Some people in very high places in Bonn alleged that it was not Germany which capitulated, but only those who signed the unconditional surrender, the statement said. The dangers implicit in this view could not be too strongly stressed; the present chauvinist and militarist atmosphere in West Germany might even lead to the emergence of a new Hitler.

Hitler had spent 90,000 million marks on preparing for World War Two; West Germany had already spent more then 150,000 million marks on military preparations. It was ominous that the military section of the report was very detailed and revealed quite clearly that West Germany intended to make the Bundeswehr the strongest army in Western Europe, the Soviet statement said. Any measures to safeguard European peace would have to include curtailment of the Bundeswehr.

The West German Government report contradicted itself on the question of disarmament, the Soviet statement said. The foreign policy section stated that the Federal Government supported partial disarmament; but the defence section categorically declared that there could be no acceptance of partial measures to ease tension, prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, or withdraw or reduce the numbers of troops, since such measures would create a "military vacuum".

The West German Government had done its utmost to perpetuate the present unsettled situation in West Berlin and to block any approaches to a peaceful settlement. West Berlin had never been a part of the West German Federal Republic, and Bonn M.Ps and West Berlin officials who attempted to organise acts of subversion in West Berlin were playing a very dangerous game.

The Christmas pass agreement between the GDR Government and the West Berlin Senate had shown that it was possible to settle urgent problems without outside interference. This was undoubtedly the reason why West German leaders were doing their best to wreck any further negotiations between the GDR and West Berlin.

News in Brief

Wolfgang Kiesewetter, Deputy Foreign Minister of the GDR, visited Zanzibar late in March. He had friendly talks with Zanzibar's Foreign Minister Mohammed Babu and Deputy Premier Hanga.

* * *

The German State Library in Berlin now contains over 4 million books. It exchanges books, periodicals and newspapers with 700 libraries in 60 countries.

ERHARD WANTS NEW FRONTIERS

West German Chancellor Ludwig Erhard called for a sweeping revision of the eastern frontiers of Germany in a speech in Bonn on March 22nd. He was addressing a congress of Germans expelled from eastern Europe at the end of World War Two.

"We are not claiming foreign territory, but we refuse to renounce the right to areas which are the traditional homeland of so many of our German brothers and sisters," Erhard said. He was referring to the areas east of the Oder-Neisse line, which became parts of Poland and the Soviet Union in 1945. Erhard claimed that "even the victors did not insist in 1945 that Germany should renounce these territories."

Commenting on the Erhard speech on March 23rd, the London "Daily Express" stated: "Those lands were lost in a war that Germany provoked. Britain has no interest whatever in helping to restore them. The British people utterly reject Dr Erhard's 'legitimate claim'."

On the same day as Erhard was claiming a large chunk of Poland, his cabinet minister Hans-Christoph Seebohm, Minister of Transport, chaired a meeting in Munich which staked the West German claim to a big area of Czechoslovakia. The meeting, of leaders of organisations of "Sudeten Germans", the former German-speaking minority in Czechoslovakia, claimed that the Munich Agreement of 1938 was still in force, and that the Sudeten area was an integral part of Germany.

This opinion was supported by the influential West German newspaper "Die Welt", which stated on March 25th: "It is the unanimous opinion of many important jurists that the Munich Agreement is still binding in international law."

GERMAN REPORT comments: The Munich Agreement on September 1938, granting Germany large territories in Czechoslovakia, was imposed by Hitler under threat of war. It was officially renounced by the British Government on August 5th 1942, in a statement saying: "As Germany has deliberately destroyed the arrangements concerning Czechoslovakia reached in 1938, in which HM Government participated, HM Government regard themselves as free from any engagements in this respect."

On the question of the Oder-Neisse frontier between Germany and Poland, the position is as follows:

At the Crimea Conference in February 1945, Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union declared: "The three Heads of Government recognise that Poland must receive substantial accessions of territory in the North and West."

The Potsdam Agreement concluded on August 2nd 1945 by the same powers specified that Poland's western frontier should run along the Oder and Neisse rivers. West German propagandists make great play with the fact that the Potsdam Agreement also states "the final delimitation of the frontier should await the peace settlement." West German leaders such as Erhard claim that this means that the frontier ist not settled, and that the western one third of Poland really belongs to Germany. Study of the Potsdam Agreement as a whole, and the measures taken immediately after the war to implement it, shows that the word "final delimitation" only means proper demarkation on the spot, since the millions of Germans living to the east of this border were re-settled in Germany proper immediately after the war, and this step would not have been taken if there had been any serious question about the permanence of the frontier.

In 1950, one of the first international acts of the newly-formed German Democratic Republic was to sign an agreement with Poland, demarking the Oder-Neisse frontier, and today the "Oder-Neisse territories" claimed by West Germany form an integral part of Poland and have a population which is practically 100 % Polish.

Incidentally, any West German claims to Polish territory pre-suppose the over-running of the German Democratic Republic, since West Germany and Poland have no common frontier.

What Road For Social Democrats?

Does the West German Social Democratic Party plan to try to overtake the governing Christian Democrats on the right, or on the left?

This was the question posed in a leading article in the East Berlin "Neues Deutschland", central organ of the Socialist Unity Party, on March 16th. The leading article pointed out that there were signs of two tendencies in the leading circles of the SPD, the Social Democratic Party. One section, led by Herbert Wehner, vice-chairman of the SPD, was trying to outdo the Christian Democrats by being even more chauvinistic and aggressive; another section, led by Willy Brandt, West Berlin Lord Mayor and chairman of the SPD, had shown signs of "trying to get out of the trenches of the cold war."

"What is the SPD policy for Germany?" the newspaper asked. "Statements made hitherto by the chairman and the vice-chairman do not give us any clear picture. Are the seeds of a policy of understanding, as exemplified in the case of Willy Brandt, to be worked out to a consistent Social Democratic policy? Or will Wehner's ideas, tying the SPD to the aggressive revanche policy of the Christian Democrats, win the upper hand?

"Nobody, of course, expects the SPD to take over the socialist programme of the Socialist Unity Party. But it is both necessary and possible for the SPD to pursue a social democratic policy, and break away from the bankrupt policies of the Christian Democrats. To do this, the SPD only has to revive its own traditions. In the past the SPD took a clear line of opposition to nuclear arms. If it were to struggle earnestly for this goal today, this would be a great step forward.

"The SPD also had, at one time, a 'Germany Plan' which contained some elements of a policy of understanding. Why have the Social Democrats allowed Wehner to toss this plan into the wastepaper basket, and to declare that any thought of understanding is heretical?

"The chairman of the SPD is Lord Mayor of West Berlin. Why does he not demonstrate in West Berlin that the SPD is capable of developing its own, and better, policy for Germany?

"The attempt to overtake the party of the monopolists on the right will never succeed; it is only of advantage to the enemies of the German people. It is no good complying with the pressure of the Ultras; this must be opposed by a counter-pressure from the working class. All peaceable, sensible people would rally round a working class movement struggling with clear goals for peace and democracy. This is the great chance for the SPD. It can overtake the Christian Democrats on the left, or not at all."

(The "Germany Plan" of the SPD, referred to above, was announced on March 18th 1959. In the military field it called for withdrawal of foreign troops from both German states, and the ending of their military alliances; in the political field it proposed a staged programme by which the two German states should co-operate on a basis of parity, thus slowly laying the basis for eventual reunification.)

You Ask—We Answer

11-Plus : Minorities : Divorce

"Is there anything like the British 11-plus or streaming in GDR schools?".

M. H., Birmingham

There is no 11-plus test; the decisive age in GDR schools was 14 until December 1959, when the new Education Act was passed. Up to that date the choice, after completing 8 years' primary school, lay between 2 or 3 years' compulsory vocational training (for the majority) or continuing at a 12-year high school for a further 4 years ending in "Abitur" — about the equivalent of GCE—A level. There were also a few 10-year middle schools.

The Education Act introduced 10-year compulsory education for all, from 6—16. Most children are already attending such ten-year high schools and by 1965 there will be accomodation for all, so that 14 is no longer the decisive age. The choice before all children now lies between remaining in their present schools to complete the ten-year course or, if they are sufficiently talented, moving over at 14 to 12-year extended high schools to take their "Abitur", the standard required for university entrance tests — (Abitur is no longer in itself equivalent to university entrance). There are places for about 12 to 14 per cent of 14-year-olds in these extended high schools.

But there is nothing irrevocable about deciding to remain in a 10-year high school; children who finish their 10-year high school education with good results can then enter so-called "Abitur classes" in their vocational schools. These classes provide 3-year courses ending in "Abitur" alongside vocational training in the trade chosen. Syllabuses include three days' practical and three days' theoretical education. These young people are then in exactly the same position as those finishing extended high school, because these, too, now take vocational training alongside their normal school courses — one day a week and several consecutive weeks distributed throughout the year. during the entire four years at high school.

With regard to streaming, the entire situation is somewhat in flux at present; the ten-year high schools all provide the same general education and the earlier polytechnical education provided is also the same; but the tendency in the last year is for each school to concentrate on definite kinds of preliminary training which pupils can then follow up in later vocational training; this in itself leads to a certain degree of streaming, since one school cannot provide too wide a choice; the courses are conducted right in the enterprises, and pupils must be kept in a limited number of groups. For example, if a school has three parallel 10th classes, it can send each class to a different enterprise, but it cannot very well split up the classes, since this would lead to much confusion.

In the extended high schools there is, of course, the initial streaming into modern languages, natural sciences and classics — in the proportion of about 1:4:1 — with emphasis shifting gradually away from the classics to science and technology.

But further streaming is developing as a result of the concurrent vocational training. The trend here is to have each high school working with a specific limited number of enterprises, so that one school can prepare its pupils for higher education in, let us say, electrical engineering, another in building engineering, another in agriculture and so on.

Thus children attending 12-year high school have to make a fairly clear-cut decision at 14 about what they intend to do in life. This may not be the final answer, and the system has some serious disadvantages, especially in big cities or in rural areas where there are fewer extended high schools, since it means that children may be handicapped by excessively long journeys to and from school. They may tend to decide for the local high school, even if the training offered there is not what they had in mind or what they are best suited for.

* * *

"Are there any national minorities in the GDR and how are they handled?"

Miss L., London N.W. 2

There is one national minority in the GDR, the Sorbs or Wends, who live in the Lausitz, south-east of Berlin. This is a small Slav group which now number about 100,000 speaking a language of their own somewhat similar to Polish. The Sorbs were exploited for centuries by the feudal landlords of Eastern Germany, and even after serfdom was abolished in 1852 they remained landless peasants with few rights. Under the Kaiser there were various restrictions on the use of their language and various attempts to "Germanise" them. Things improved during the Weimar Republic (1919—1933), but the nazis, who regarded the Sorbs as "second-rate people", re-introduced and sharpened the old restrictions.

Immediately after the war, the Sorbs were granted the right to use their mother tongue in education, administration and in the courts of law, as well as to develop their national characteristics. These rights are guaranteed under Article 11 of the GDR Constitution promulgated in 1949.

There are more than 100 general schools and 2 high schools which teach in the Sorb language, and parents can send their children to one of these schools if they wish. There is a Sorb newspaper, several periodicals, and a flourishing publication of books in the Sorb language. Bautzen, a medieval walled town near the Czech border, is the main centre of Sorb culture, and the site of the Domowina, the Sorb organisation.

* * *

"What about divorce in the GDR? How does the rate compare with other countries?"

D. M., Nottingham

The divorce laws in the GDR are based upon the principle that it should be possible to dissolve marriages which have ceased to be effective; as in many other countries, efforts are being made to prevent homes being broken up without due cause, and in all cases the well-being of any children of the marriage is the overriding consideration.

After a divorce "boom" in the immediate post-war years, the divorce rate has now levelled off at about 1.5 cases per year per 1000 of the population; this compares to 2.2 cases per 1000 in the United States, and 0.5 cases per 1000 in Britain. In 31% of divorces the reason given is adultery on the part of the husband; in 17% it is the husband's addiction to drink; in 13% it is the wife's adultery.

DE-NAZIFICATION - EAST & WEST

When the war ended Germany was left with many big problems, one of the biggest of which was denazification. How was this problem dealt with in the eastern part of Germany? And what was done in West Germany?

Professor Albert Norden, prominent GDR publicist and member of the Political Bureau of the Socialist Unity Party, gives some interesting details in a booklet, "Rise of a Free Germany", just published in East Berlin.

The following article is based on the facts and figures given by Professor Norden, supplemented by explanations necessary for non-German readers.

In the eastern part of Germany all Hitler's financial backers, all war criminals and other active nazis were removed from responsible positions and deprived of power and influence immediately after World War Two.

By January 1947 over 390,000 nazi civil servants had been removed from their posts. Denazification commissions investigated a further 140,000 nazi officials between August 1947 and March 1948; more than 11,000 of these were dismissed, over 10,000 demoted and about 44,000 declared unfit to occupy higher posts. About 75,000 were registered as having been only nominal nazis. Persons suspected of nazi or war crimes were tried and punished, but nominal nazis were given the chance to take part in democratic reconstruction.

Communists, Social Democrats and liberals who had fought against fascism took over the administration.

By the end of 1947 about 6,800 big landowners and 1,600 active nazis had been deprived of their landed property; a total of nearly six million acres of land was distributed amongst 460,000 farm workers, small peasants and re-settlers.

A referendum on expropriation of war criminals and war profiteers was held in Saxony on June 30th 1946; a big majority voted for expropriation, and laws were passed in the eastern part of Germany nationalising the factories and mines owned by the main supporters and beneficiaries of fascism. In this way the working class took over the key positions in industry.

Developments in West Germany took a different course. Immediately after the war, Social Democrats and many bourgeois politicians demanded punishment of Nazi supporters and profiteers, but they very soon changed their tune, as anti-communism began to dominate West German politics again. The Western Occupation Powers' policy of building up West Germany against the communist east was eagerly supported, not only by German reactionaries, but also by right-wing Social Democratic Party and trade union leaders.

Low-ranking nazis went through the mill of "denazification" in West Germany, but the real criminals — the bankers, big industrialists and landowners — were given a free hand again. The decartellisation of German industry, laid down in the economic principles of the Potsdam Agreement, was never carried out.

In June 1946, only one year after the end of the war, Adenauer stated in a memorandum that "the time has come to consider whether the harsh decisions on eradicating the nazis cannot be softened", and by 1952 he was telling the West German Parliament: "About 66 per cent of senior civil servants are former members of the Nazi Party. But I believe that if we think this over calmly we must admit that we could not have acted otherwise."

The sporadic reinstallation of incriminated nazis soon became a system. It became declared government policy in May 1951 when the West German Parliament passed the "Law on Article 131 of the West German Constitution", which reinstated in their posts and pension rights civil servants sacked during the early postwar denazification proceedings.

What was the position in the vital field of the judiciary? At the end of the war 80 per cent of the judges and public prosecutors in East Germany had been members of the Nazi Party. The entire system was reorganised and all nazis removed by the end of 1948. Of the 955 public prosecutors and 985 judges in the German Democratic Republic today, not one was ever a member of the Nazi Party. About 75 per cent of them are former workers and one third are women. Only about 1 per cent of all present judges were employed in the judiciary before 1945.

No such clean-up was ever undertaken in West Germany. Since 1956 the GDR has regularly offered the West German government access to original documents proving that at least 1,155 former nazi judges occupy senior positions in the Ministry of Justice and the law courts in West Germany.

Protests in West Germany and abroad finally forced the West German Government to take some action, and in June 1961 the West German Parliament passed a law stating that "a judge or public prosecutor who worked in this capacity between September 1st 1939 and May 9th 1945 may at his own request be placed on pension". In 1963 it was announced that 150 such judges and public prosecutors had retired and that only six remained in office. In fact, however, many hundreds of former nazi judges and public prosecutors still occupy important posts in the West German law courts.

The entire nazi police force was cleaned out in the eastern part of Germany; by mid-1947 more than 90 per cent of the new police force were former workers, anti-fascists, communists, social democrats and trade unionists. Senior posts were all filled by veteran communists, International Brigaders and resistance fighters, many of whom

What the Potsdam Agreement said

War criminals and those who participated in planning or carrying out . . . atrocities or war crimes shall be arrested and brought to judgment. Nazi leaders, influential Nazi supporters, and high officials of Nazi organisations and institutions . . . shall be arrested and interned.

All members of the Nazi Party who have been more than nominal participants in its activities . . . shall be removed from positions of responsibility and replaced by persons . . . deemed capable of assisting in developing democratic institutions in Germany.

German education shall be so controlled as completely to eliminate Nazi and militarist doctrines and to make possible successful development of democratic ideas.

The judicial system will be reorganised in accordance with the principles of democracy, of justice under law and of equal rights for all citizens.

(Extracts from the Potsdam Agreement, concluded by Britain, USA and the Soviet Union on August 2rd 1945)

had spent long years in the concentrations camps.

Many of these veterans have since had to retire on account of ill health or old age, but even now — eighteen years after the war — there are 24 International Brigaders and 810 veteran anti-fascists in leading posts in the GDR police force.

The situation is similar in the GDR armed forces. Nearly 95 per cent of officers are former workers and 19 generals are veteran anti-fascists.

In West Germany, on the other hand, former members of the SS, Gestapo and other nazi police organisations now occupy many key posts in the Ministry of Interior and the police force. In 1961 employment and pension rights were restored to former members of the SS.

Every single one of the 160-odd generals and admirals now running the West German Bundeswehr was a high-ranking officer under Hitler.

In the field of education we see a similar picture. After the defeat of fascism about 22,000 of the 37,000 teachers in the eastern part of Germany were dismissed from their posts because of their membership of the Nazi Party, and 43,000 new teachers installed. The textbooks in use in the nazi period were pulped and new standard textbooks issued for use in all schools. The new history books in particular devote special attention to presenting a clear view of German history and giving children proper information on the development of fascism and of the crimes committed in the nazi period. The new teachers were veteran anti-fascists and young people of good will who were prepared to help build up a new, democratic educational system and to educate themselves while teaching. By 1963 there were nearly 165,000 teachers in the GDR. They are bringing up children in a spirit of socialism, peace and international friendship.

In West Germany, nazi teachers were not thrown out of the schools, education offices or higher institutions. School textbooks were not withdrawn. History textbooks in particularly continue, even after revision, to belittle nazi crimes and present a confused picture of the cause of the two world wars; a recently introduced school subject, "Study of the East", stirs up feelings of resentment and a desire for revenge and for the return of former German territory amongst school children. A British educational expert who conducted investigations in West German primary schools found that 71 per cent of the children he questioned still hate the Russians, 49 per cent hate the French, 39 per cent hate the Jews and 29 per cent hate the English.

Student in East Berlin

by Angela Heinrich

I have been a student at Humboldt University in Berlin for a year and a half and I like the life very much, although the excitement of the first few weeks is over now; students have their worries, too.

My working day starts with the rattling of my alarm clock at seven in the morning — the worst moment in the day. I jump out of bed, rush to the bathroom, gulp down my breakfast and hurry out of the house. As I live in the centre of Berlin I can walk to the university.

Lectures start at 8.15, and I generally arrive at the very last minute. It is very irritating to lose valuable minutes every morning at the entrance because one has to show one's identity card to the porter (even though he would not notice if you showed him an old season-ticket).

I am at the university five days a week; Saturday is our free day. We have about 35 lectures a week. I am studying Russian and English in a special interpreters' course. It is varied and interesting. As Russian is our main subject we spend more time on Russian than on English. We have conversation practice in small seminar groups of 7 or 8, with Russian or British-born teachers. Here we talk about everything, sometimes under a special heading, sometimes not, and most stress is laid on fluent speech. Other lessons stress correct grammar, reading or translation. For good pronunciation and intonation we work in our phonetics cabinet with a tape recorder.

Since language study needs intensive training we have many more seminars than other students, but we have lectures, too, including social science lectures, which all students have to attend, and lectures on the history, geography and literature of the English and Russian-speaking countries.

Once a week we have sports, in the swimming-baths. We are all very glad that sports are compulsory, otherwise we should probably be too lazy to do this of our own accord, especially since we are at the university until late every afternoon.

We also have our lunch at the university. There is always a tremendous rush to get a seat between one and two o'clock, and it seems as if there are about four times as many hungry students as there are seats. The meal is very cheap — only 60 pfennigs (the cost of four or five cigarettes); it is nourishing but not very appetising, but one cannot expect too much for the money. I suppose students everywhere have the same trouble.

Lectures are over about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. When I get home, my nice landlady has already cleaned and heated my room; she also washes up and sometimes even does some cooking for me and is always very helpful. I may use the bathroom and kitchen, too. But considering that I have my own furniture, the room is expensive; I pay 50 marks a month for it. Students living in lodgings in Berlin generally pay between 30 and 50 marks a month. (This is cheap compared with West Germany, of course, where students often have to pay 80 marks and more). Coal and wood cost me about 30 marks each winter.

Although there is a hostel for university students, most of us prefer to live in digs. The hostel is cheap (11 marks including washing), but it has very few single rooms; many students have to share with one or more others, not always from the same faculty. And however well behaved they are there is always a great deal of noise, which is very disturbing if one has to work. But the biggest disadvantage is that it is too far away from the university.

In lodgings one is one's own master, apart from possible trouble with the landlady. There are many

unkind jokes about terrifying landladies, but sometimes they have to deal with students who have strange ideas about paying the rent, how loud they should play the radio or how late visitors should stay. Landladies are mostly elderly and if one tries to be kind and thoughtful one can generally get along with them.

Some students, mostly young men, are lucky and manage to avoid all these problems by renting cheap, dilapidated flats and renovating them in their spare time. But of course, they have to save up to do this, for the scholarships which most students get are enough to pay the rent, meals, books etc. but not for any ambitious schemes. The basic scholarship for all students whose parents earn less than 1,000 marks a month is 150 marks; there is a supplement of 40 marks for good work, so that many students get as much as 190 marks a month. There are extra allowances, too, for orphans or semi-orphans or children of large families, so that the scholarship may be as much as 250 marks a month. There are also some opportunities to earn a little extra money, such as working as an extra at the theatre.

When a student has saved up enough, he can buy paint and wallpaper and, with the help of his friends, transform a shabby old flat into something quite respectable. It is nice to be independent, but it is also a nuisance to come home tired from the university and then have to do the cleaning and heating. It also takes up a great deal of time.

The late afternoon is my time for homework. With us interpreter students homework consists mainly of grammar drill and learning vocabulary. Often a friend comes in to see me or I go to her and we do our work together. We are all good friends in our group. We often go together to the theatre or cinema and our university youth organisation arranges concerts, film shows, special lectures and discussions.

But we also like to get together informally after work is done. We have supper together and talk; then the bell rings and other friends drop in, bringing with them something to eat and drink, and their new books or records. And we talk and argue about politics (often about Berlin, of course), or about our lectures, or we nearly come to blows about old-time or modern jazz or about new books or plays. And of course the girls talk about boys and the boys about girls. The hours go by until somebody looks at the clock and then we have to rush to catch the last train.

And before we know where we are term is nearly over — much too soon for me, because our universities tend to have examinations every six months. These are very popular amongst lecturers but detested by students. We interpreters have written and oral examinations in our languages and mostly two other oral exams in other subjects. Life is terrible during the last few days before the exams. I always sit up studying till midnight or later. Those who have worked steadily the whole term are at an advantage, but most of us manage to get through.

Exams mean the end of term and saying good-bye to our friends for a while, so we must celebrate. But holidays do not start at once; first we do some practical work for 4 or 6 weeks. There are many kinds of practical work for interpreters. I prefer taking tourists round Berlin or even round the Republic. I always enjoy this very much and it is a good opportunity to improve my language knowledge and get a taste of what my life will be like later on.

We get no pay during these weeks, for they are part of our training, but we can earn some money if we take tourists round during our holidays as well. This helps to pay for the rest of the holidays. The university and our youth organisation arrange trips abroad for students at reduced rates. Last year I had the chance to go to the Soviet Union for a fortnight. It was a wonderful trip.

But I always spend part of my summer holidays at the sea-side because my parents live on the Baltic coast. This makes things easy for me, but my friends have to book places at holiday camps in January, since so many students like to spend their summer holiday camping at the seaside. Living in tents is not very luxurious, but if you have a sense of the romantic it is fun to sit around a camp-fire at night, or take long walks through the woods and cook your own meals out of doors.

Winter term starts in October after we have spent three or four weeks on the land helping to get in the potato harvest. This work has its disadvantages, of course, such as aching muscles, wet feet and sometimes a bad cold, but we have a great deal of fun, too. It is mostly voluntary, but sometimes we get a little pay, or a bonus for extra good work. The farmers appreciate our help and we always get plenty to eat, so that when we come back to Berlin we are bursting with energy and eager to get on with our studies.

What's On in East Berlin Theatres?

East Berlin's six theatres were offering rich and varied fare ranging from Shakespeare to MacColl for Spring 1964. Like most continental theatres, they show a different play each night.

The Deutsches Theater ran the gamut from Shakespeare's "King Lear" and Goethe's "Iphigenia in Tauris" to Sean O'Casey's "Red Roses For Me" and a dramatisation of Thomas Wolffe's "Look Homeward, Angel"; from Schiller's "Wilhelm Tell" to Chekhov's "Cherry Orchard", two comedies by Carl Sternheim, pre-World-War-One German playwright, and a new play by Rumanian Horia Lovinescu.

There was more Shakespeare — "Two Gentlemen of Verona" — at the Kammerspiele, which also put on an early comedy by Goethe, Moliere's "Tartuffe" and Saul O'Hara's "Inspector Campbell's Last Case".

The Berliner Ensemble came up with Brecht's famous "Threepenny Opera", which has been running since 1960; his famous anti-Hitler play, "The Preventable Rise of Arturo Ui"; "Shweyk in the Second World War"; and three special Brecht evenings most popular of which is a riotous production of "Der kleine Mahagonny".

The Volksbühne's productions ranged from Goldoni's "Servant of Two Masters" and a satirical play by Lope de Vega, a stage version of Tolstoi's "War and Peace" and a pre-World War-One-comedy by Carl Zuckmaier to Kurt Tucholsky's "Schloss Gripsholm".

Two big successes at the Maxim Gorki Theatre were a satirical comedy by Pavel Kohout, popular young Czech dramatist, based on Jules Verne's "Round the World in 80 Days", and MacColl's "So Long at the Fair". Other plays shown were two 19th century comedies by Theodor Fontane and Heinrich von Kleist, Gorki's "Lower Depths" and a World War Two tragedy by Hungarian playwright Mesterhazy.

There was more Shakespeare — "As You Like It" set to music — at East Berlin's special children's theatre, which also showed its first children's opera, based on a popular fairy story; a modern play about school life; and dramatisations of a Russian legend, "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer", "Little Red Riding Hood" and "The Snow Queen".

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Weird articles in the western press about the German Democratic Republic are nothing new, but I am always glad when Joseph Wechsberg, that one-time talented American reporter of Czech origin, has a bash, because his articles are at least good for a laugh.

In a series of articles in the "New Yorker" in late 1957 he established that East German suits "smell like a wet dog", for instance.

Now Mr Wechsberg has been giving the GDR another going-over, and the West German newspaper "Die Welt" has been serialising his efforts; they will probably be syndicated elsewhere in English, but I have had to re-translate his flights of fancy from the German.

First, here is Wechsberg on GDR nursery schools:

"Education is completely Marxist-Leninist. This begins in kindergarten, where the little children are asked: 'Did one of you lose his daddy in the war?' " ("Die Welt", March 13th)

It is nice to picture these lanky nursery school children, ranging upwards in age from 18, piping their answer to this question. Perhaps they have been delayed in their development by intensive Marxist-Leninism of this sort.

Then Wechsberg moves on to a building site:

"I see how these houses are built by large cranes, which heave the standardised components from the ground and fit them together. The washbasins, toilets and even the glazed windows are already fitted. The whole thing makes an Asiatic impression on me, perhaps because of the toilet bowls lying around." ("Die Welt", March 11th).

Possibly some psychiatrist reader can suggest why toilet bowls make Mr Wechsberg think of Asia; it baffles me.

Goldwater

GERMAN REPORT never expected to quote Senator Barry Goldwater with approval, but he has been known to say something sensible, possibly by mistake. Recently, a couple of US military planes have "strayed" over the GDR, and have been shot down after ignoring signals to land. Commenting on the first shooting-down, Goldwater stated, according to the "New York Herald Tribune" of January 30th:

"I don't know what they were doing over East Germany. It's kind of hard to believe that all your navigational equipment would go out at once on that airplane. If you're over enemy territory where you're not supposed to be, you can expect things like that."

Circular

Recently we have been circularising in Britain, asking readers to suggest subjects they would like to see more fully dealt with in GERMAN REPORT; we are still sorting out the thousands of replies received, and hope to present a report on the poll in an early issue. If you still have one of our cards lying around, please post it back today.

We don't intend to extend the poll to readers in other parts of the world for the time being, but I would like to urge them, now and any time they feel like it, to let us known what they think of the paper, and what subjects they would like to read more about. Incidentally, if you get GERMAN REPORT by post, and the address is mangled, please let us know, and we shall try to get it put straight.

The poll form which we sent out to readers in Britain included the printed line "I am particularly interested in the following subjects: Women." A surprising number of readers had the same idea; they marked "Women" and added pithy comments, most frequently "Who isn't?"

Gongs

Not many of our readers are likely to be offered the pompous West German decoration "The Grand Cross of the Federal Republic", but you never know. West German Presidents when travelling abroad tend to take a trunk of these medals along, scattering them on everyone they meet, from stationmasters to political leaders.

If you should be offered one, it may be hard to resist, because it is one of those really high-class bits of tin which entitles you to wear a sort of diagonal cummerbund with your tails, if you have any tails. But before rushing round to Moss Bros, please reflect on the sort of company you will be getting into. On another page of this issue we note that the exclusive band of wearers of this decoration has recently been expanded to include a delightful gentleman named Heinrich Bütefisch, one-time production chief of a nazi factory which drove slave-labourers to death in Auschwitz Concentration camp.

There is no doubt at all that Herr Bütefisch is in fact a war criminal; an American court sentenced him to six years imprisonment for his wartime crimes. He was, incidentally, a Lieutenant Colonel in the SS, but he produced high-ranking SS friends after the war who testified that this was a purely honorary rank conferred upon him because he was (a) such a fine technician; and (b) because he had been to tea with Himmler. He is today one of the top men in the West German chemical industry, and has presumably been awarded the Federal Grand Cross because (a) he is such a fine technician; and (b) because he has been to tea with Adenauer, or Erhard, or someone.

And if Bütefisch is not enough to put you off accepting this fine decoration, then have look at a few of the other holders of the Grand Cross. There is, naturally, Hans Maria Globke, until recently State Secretary to Chancellor Adenauer; he had his finger in practically every nazi pie, ranging from drafting the Nuremberg racial laws to deciding which parts of Africa should be incorporated in the Greater German Reich. Since his retirement from his post as Adenauer's aide, Globke has appeared in a new capacity; he tours West Germany appearing as a defence witness at trials of SS killers. He does not have much to tell the court, only explaining that he feels sure that no SS man could haved disobeyed orders without getting into trouble; but defence lawyers like to call him, because they can then tactfully suggest to the court that if men like Globke, who planned the murders, are still walking around free, then it is unfair to sentence their clients, the little criminals who only did the dirty work.

Stop Press

On March 25th the office of the West German President announced that Bütefisch's medal was being taken away from him again since "new facts have come to light". Bütefisch's criminal activities in Auschwitz were no secret; a US court sentenced him for them in July 1948. The persons awarding the medal obviously considered this unimportant until protests began to come in from abroad.

Most West German newspapers ignored the sensational withdrawal of the medal.

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